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No. 94

THE BRITISH EMPIRE

THE PRESENCE THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

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Deputy Editor Christopher Farman
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Staff Writer Susan Hillaby
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Art Director Graham Davis
Art Assistants Laurence Bradbury
Joyce Mason
Editorial Assistant Vanessa Kramer
Staff Photographer Eileen Tweedy
Sales Director George Gillespie
Consultants D.K.Fieldhouse, Lecturer in Commonwealth History and Fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford
A.F.Madden, Reader in Commonwealth Government and Fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford

STUART LEGG, who wrote the main text of this issue, spent 30 years as a writer and producer of documentary films, specializing in the problems of emergent peoples. During his film career, he wrote *Money Behind the Screen*, *Cinema and Television*, and *The Railway Book*. He has since published two studies of naval warfare, *Trafalgar* and *Jutland*, and *The Heartland*, on inner Asia.

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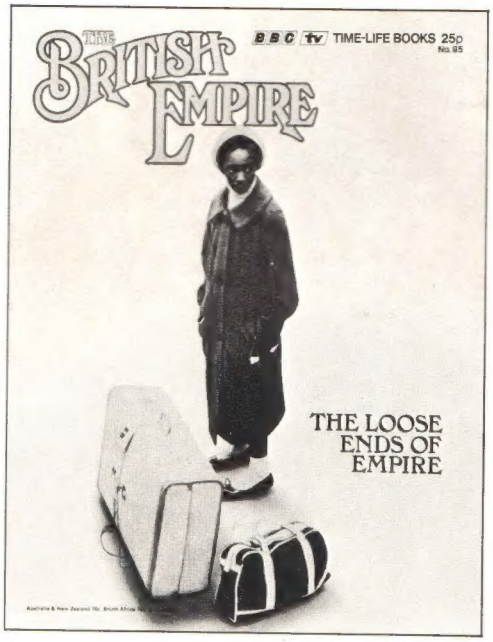

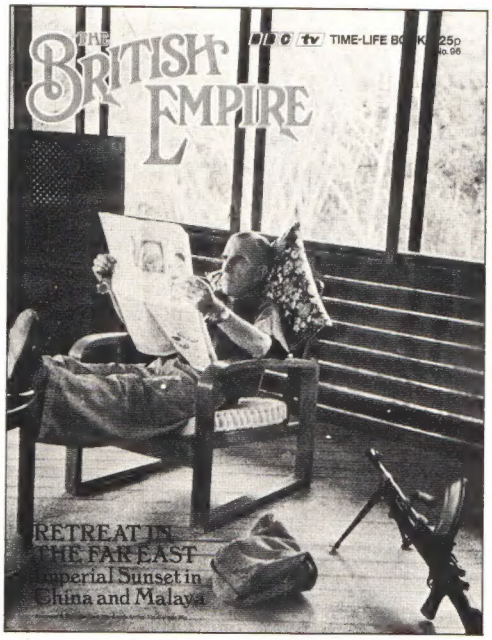

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THE PRESENCE THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

"We happen to be the best people in the world," Cecil Rhodes once declared, "with the highest ideals of decency and justice and liberty and peace, and the more of the world we inhabit, the better it is for humanity." Humanity does not entirely share Rhodes's assumption, but even those who dispute that Britain's imperial presence was a force for good cannot deny its enormous and enduring influence.

Although the Union Jack no longer flutters over a quarter of the earth's surface and the gunboats and the soldiers departed long ago, Britain's powerful imprint remains. Unaffected by nationalist eruptions or internal upheavals, it is indelibly stamped on landscapes, language, laws, sport and social customs from Australasia to the Arctic, from New England to New Delhi.

Early in the 18th Century a city grew up between the James and York rivers, in the south-eastern corner of Virginia. It was planned by Virginia's energetic, choleric Governor, Francis Nicholson, a man so frequently the worse for wear that he was said to have been born drunk; and its layout was to be along "modern" and "substantial" lines. As its buildings rose, contemporary observers commented favourably on them: the Governor's palace was "the best in all English America," the church was "adorned as the best churches in London," even the gaol was "large and convenient."

For some 80 years, while the first Empire of Britain rose to its height, the new city served as the capital of one of her most important American colonies. Then, after the Declaration of Independence in 1776, it went into an eclipse. It suffered a series of disastrous fires. It sustained serious damage in the American Civil War. And thereafter its classical purity became encrusted with the shacks and shops and stables of an age of rapid economic expansion, an age with little reverence for the past.

Today the city that was forgotten is Colonial Williamsburg. Repaired and rebuilt over a generation by patient research and loving craftsmanship, it stands exactly as it stood 200 years ago: a square mile of stately salmon-coloured brick and nestling white clapboard; of graceful ironwork and marching balustrades; of stone beasts and shields emblazoned with the royal arms peeping out from dark topiary and frothing dogwood; of interiors rich in mahogany and walnut, marble and ornamented plaster. And over all, above the towering elms and whispering mulberries, flies the Great Union – the British flag in the 18th Century, the forerunner of the Union Jack.

Williamsburg is probably the most generous memorial anywhere to a former way of life and a vanished rule. It is essentially a memorial to the British presence in America; and, in the days of Empire, that presence pervaded not only eastern America, but much of the whole world. For millions upon millions it came to influence the patterns of doing and being, the springs of intercourse, the ordering of belief and behaviour. Moreover, the British did not merely touch the world and pass, with the passage of their power, into oblivion. They lastingly transformed it. They offered or imposed their institutions and their attitudes; and many of their subject peoples adopted or adapted them permanently.

In an engraving intended to show the bestial plight of heathen natives, Cook Islanders, ripe for the stern civilizing zeal of Victorian missionaries, caper in a wild tribal dance.

In 1829, John Wilson made his famous remark that the sun never sets on the British Empire. Physically, it is setting now. But travel westward, into the imperial sunset, around the tremendous earth-girdle of Britain's former possessions. Everywhere you find her image alive and vivid still: here in the practice of great principles, there in humdrum daily habit, elsewhere in details odd and even ludicrous. From Williamsburg, travel north to Canada, across the undefended frontier, that invisible testament to the common trust and friendship of two communities of British stock.

Until recently, an old gentleman was wont to stalk the streets of a Canadian city. He wore a straw boater on his head, and at his side waddled an elderly bulldog with a little Union Jack wired upright to its collar. Both of them and the mystique they paraded, have disappeared; for waves of immigrants have reduced the British element in Canada to a minority. Not that Canada was ever exclusively British. There were always *les Canadiens*.

In many ways the plural, highly technical society that Canada now is bears the marks of the British past. Not so many years ago, a story runs, in the days when governors-general were still appointed from London, a newly-arrived representative of the King came out one morning to take the air on the steps of Rideau Hall, his residence in Ottawa. The duty constable of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police snapped to the salute. "Good morning, my man," said the Governor-General affably. "Tell me, what is the name of your horse?" Perplexed, but resourceful, the Mountie pointed to his car parked near by and read off the figures on the numberplate.

R.C.M.P. patrols these days are more likely to ride aeroplanes and speedboats than horses. But the Britishness of that renowned force survives. Their red full-dress tunics derive from the lawless frontier days in the North-west, when red – the colour of the British infantry's coats – served as a salutary warning.

The Scottish influence in Canada was especially strong, particularly in the Maritimes and Ontario. At Caledonian games kilted stalwarts toss the caber, and plaids and sporrans swirl to the haunt of bagpipes. From the Atlantic to the

After conversion, solid houses, Western clothes and a dedication to hard work illustrate the benefits that missionaries considered it their duty to impose on backward communities.

Pacific the Canadian railways built huge turreted hotels which recall the mediaeval strongholds of the lairds. Long lists of "Macs" fill columns of the telephone directories. The English may have acquired their Empire, absent-mindedly or otherwise; but the Scots often did the tough dogwork.

Thus did Alexander Murray find himself in 1847 transplanted from his Argyllshire village to the banks of the Porcupine River at the fringes of the Arctic, whither the Hudson's Bay Company had sent him to establish a trading-post. "As I sat smoking my pipe," he grumbled, "with my face besmeared with tobacco juice to keep at bay the damned mosquitoes, my first impressions were anything but favourable."

Nowadays, the Canadian North – the vast expanse of subpolar tundra which Charles II made over to a group of London "Adventurers" – the Hudson's Bay Company – is busy with the air traffic which serves its towns and mining settlements.

Cross the Rockies to Vancouver and find, set against the white of skyscrapers and the blue of Pacific inlets, Stanley Park, perhaps the most beautiful public playground in the world. To the English, with their green fingers, the making of parks came naturally; and their handiwork rings the globe. The botanical gardens on the West Indian island of Dominica, at Peradeniya in Sri Lanka (Ceylon) and at Sydney all reveal that flair for combining taste with skill, the wild with the controlled, that amounts to genius. It has even been remarked that Empire-building, to the British, was simply an extended form of gardening.

From Stanley Park cross the Strait of Juan de Fuca to the city of Victoria on Vancouver Island – a veritable "Little Britain." In former days, when soldiers and officials from India were seeking a haven of retirement, there was much to be said for Vancouver Island. Pensions went a fair way; and, more important, the climate was temperate. And so, in a landscape of lumber-mills and salmon-canneries, Victoria became an enclave of grizzled heads and white moustaches, carriage-clocks and hot-water bottles, cloth caps and trousers that somehow resembled riding-breeches.

And though the Raj and most of its retired servants have gone, Victoria's Englishry has taken root. The city still wears the gracious air of Tunbridge Wells or Cheltenham. Its more discreet shops reflect the urbane manners of Harrods and the Army and Navy Stores. A trio of musicians in the restaurant makes palm-court music amid the tinkle of teacups.

Follow the setting imperial sun into the Pacific Ocean. Traverse the infinite horizons of sea and sky that Cook reduced to human grasp; the island chains where Englishmen, voyaging after him, have left indelible impressions of their thought and action. Pass the Galapagos group where a marvelling Charles Darwin, in the lamplit cabin of the *Beagle*, was "brought near to that great fact – that mystery of mysteries – the first appearance of new beings on this earth."

Glance at Pitcairn Island, where the descendants of the *Bounty* mutineers, Tahitian bronze darkening Hampshire features, launch their boats to draw supplies from a passing ship. And halt for a moment at the Cook Islands – to glimpse yet another facet of the British legacy. A little pair of engravings of the 1870s suggests, with grotesque overstatement and intolerance of cultural differences, the Victorian impact on these remote Pacific isles. The first shows their lamentable state *before* the advent of the missionary movement. The rising sun reveals a dancing circle of bloodthirsty warriors, decked with war-paint and brandishing heavy clubs. Two sinister priests hail the dawn, one sounding a conch, the other lifting his arms in heathen worship. A crouching mother, gross breasts hanging to her raffia skirt, tugs viciously at the hair of her screaming child.

Compare this tableau of idolatry and beastliness with the second picture – showing the same scene *after* the arrival of Christianity. Now, in the rays of the morning, a sturdy British ship rides at anchor. Along the shore, decent, if uninspired, housing has appeared. The leaping warriors have given way to a promising vegetable plot where a native horticulturalist, attended by a fat pig, demonstrates his new-found skills to his wife.

In the place of the scalp-wrenching slut sits a seemly girl feeding a clutch of hens; and where the priests rehearsed their pagan rites busy men saw up a tree trunk – presumably for further housing. In the foreground, hatted and parasolled, her skirts firmly to her ankles, an English lady promenades – observing with benevolent satisfaction the useful arts burgeoning around her.

Those engravings reflect what a pious

and powerful section of the British people wanted its emissaries to achieve at the ends of a savage earth. Sometimes wishful thinking was founded on fact: in Fiji, a few hundred miles further on our westward route, a social revolution occurred. Little more than a century ago the Fiji groups were the "Cannibal Isles" of song and story. The aggressive hostility of their inhabitants was notorious, their appetite for human flesh insatiable; a single chief is said to have eaten nearly a thousand very unfortunate victims.

Now they are among the most welcoming of Pacific islanders – and the most British-orientated. Fijian troops have served Britain in her wars, and the strains of "Chase me Charlie," played by a smart-stepping police band, float on the stir of the wind through the palms. School playgrounds echo to the thud of footballs kicked by barefoot children. And from almost any family dwelling comes the murmur of the grace that opens and closes every meal. Preaching, teaching, practising, the missionaries effected this extraordinary conversion; and, ironically, their work has exposed friendly, modern Fiji to the worst ravages of tourism.

An 18th-Century print caricatures the globe-trotting English naturalist, Sir Joseph Banks.

At the Pacific's Asian rim, its peaky outlines restless among the melting hues of cloud and water, stands Hong Kong. Hong Kong, with its wealth stacked steeply in white mansions up the hills, its grinding squalor spread below, its four million shouting, sweating, scurrying people clinging to the terraced island and overspilling into Kowloon on the Chinese mainland, is a glass-case British colony. Here the machinery of colonial administration purrs on, as it once did in possessions around the globe. And though Government House dinner-parties, formerly the exclusive preserve of British guests, are now well weighted with Chinese notables, the practice of democracy in the sense of representative rule is strictly limited.

"You must understand," explained an official to a visiting stranger, "that Hong Kong is a benevolent autocracy." The visitor was hard of hearing. "Did you say benevolent hypocrisy?" he queried. There was a long pause. "I shall dine out on that," the official finally conceded.

Britons in Hong Kong have always balanced on a tightrope. The vast bulk of China has ever been uncomfortably close; and in the 19th Century – no doubt from a sense of unease – the "red barbarians" from the West were as arrogant towards their Chinese subjects as the Sons of Heaven, the Emperors, were towards them. Everything possible was done to prevent "the injury and inconvenience of intermixture with the Chinese residents."

Now, the Communist monolith looms across the border. Waved on by stocky Chinese traffic-police in shorts reminiscent of the soccer field, you can drive through the New Territories, on the mainland, through the village called Mai Po, to the frontier where the Union Jack waves beside the Red Star of the People's Republic and two worlds watch each other. Yet, back in the city, Communist and capitalist banks, cheek by jowl, rear their windows to the sky; and trade with the mainland flourishes in normal times.

In recent times, the Hong Kong government has faithfully upheld one of the great British principles: the right of

political sanctuary, and the duty to provide it. The stream of refugees from China began with the collapse of the Manchu dynasty in 1911. During the Sino-Japanese hostilities of the 1930s, it reached flood proportions. With the coming of the Maoist régime in 1949, it became a tidal wave.

Striving to cope with the refugees, Hong Kong built and built, and contorted itself to find jobs and livelihoods. Great tenement blocks, their balconies almost hidden by cataracts of washing, rear up on every hand. Shipyards and factories have mushroomed. Taking in the refugees has created countless problems; but the alternative was not acceptable to the British humanitarian tradition.

Pass down across Vietnam, by the stone splendours of Angkor into Malaysia – and Kuala Lumpur. Here you can see a British colonial capital almost exactly as it was early in the 20th Century: its trim official buildings, like a cluster of miniature Oriental Oxbridge colleges, set round the green expanse of the cricket club; its avenues redolent of high collars above white duck trousers, mutton-chop sleeves at the reins of spanking dogcarts.

It may not survive long, this oasis-museum, for Malaysia is the richest country in South-East Asia, and the coloured concrete of a new age advances inexorably. But, for the moment, at least, Kuala Lumpur's railway station still stands, sublime in its Victorian compound of Eastern invention and strict utility, its bulbous cupolas rising from the tracks, its soaring minarets making a mosque of booking-hall and waiting-room.

Then head south along the fine highway that cuts through the nightmare jungle of Malaysia's spine, past planters' Land-rovers lurching in the rubber groves and a monstrous tin-dredger uttering a Clyde-side oath; past the Cameron Highlands, half-timbered, rose-clad, tourist-free retreat of senior expatriate executives; and, rounding a bend at speed, remember your road manners. For there, in the dark primeval ferocity of towering trees and clutching tendrils, you encounter the familiar red road sign enjoining a limit of 30 m.p.h., standing primly beside the remains of a cobra someone has run over.

Kipling said of Singapore that, though England was supposed to own the island, the Chinese ran it. But even now that it is virtually a Chinese city state, Singapore retains the stamp set on it by the British. Overlooking the rash of shipping in the harbour, St. Andrew's Cathedral and government offices, side by side, recall the British union of Church and State. At close of business, thoughts along the waterfront turn to the sundowner; for in the old days, alcohol at sunset was believed to prevent malaria.

Tradition is convenient; at world-famous bars men in Sanforized shirts and singlets, in a mixture of the modern world and the age of Conrad or Maugham, carry on the determined pursuit of pink gin, that standard British tropical prophylactic. And in back streets round the corner, thumbed and crumpled cheques – their lives, if necessary, prolonged with Sello-tape – circulate from hand to hand. A British signature on a British bank is still as good as currency.

Singapore's location makes it an entrepôt of trade. It is also a meeting-place of ideas, a city of conferences. And among the salesmen, strategists and scholars who throng Singapore's hotels, you may well find yourself rubbing shoulders with a herd of briefcase-laden lawyers. They will have come together from all over the Commonwealth, and beyond it. At home, some wear the robes of barristers, some the full-bottomed wigs of judges; others practise in sober gowns or merely in dark suits. But they all serve what has been described as "the strange amalgam of case-law and statute" that is English law.

The English Common Law forms the legal framework of many nations which were once British possessions. To the layman it often appears puzzling – an ancient hotch-potch rather than a modern code. Yet its lasting value is that it is law made for ordinary citizens, and not vice versa; and no one, however powerful, is above it. One of its greatest American exponents – Mr. Justice Holmes – has described it as based not on logic but experience. Every "reasonable man" – jurors and witnesses as well as advocates and police – play their part in applying it. And in its practical, pragmatic nature, it reflects the realities of everyday life.

A court case is less a detached inquiry after truth than a down-to-earth battle – more like a football match in which two opposing sides slug it out in the presence of a referee. And the referee – the judge – is not a career official but a lawyer drawn from the ranks of the profession; and though he is appointed by the State, he is not its servant. With the prosecution striving to overthrow the presumed innocence of the accused man and the defendant fighting to rebut the plaintiff's claims, the rules to ensure fair play are all-important. Hence the apparent technicality, the typically English expression of vital principles in practical details.

It has been held, for example, that each word of the writ of habeas corpus is worth more than a library of books in praise of liberty. English law was seldom, if ever, accepted voluntarily in the areas of Britain's overseas influence. To some the British took it with them: on others they imposed it. But it has shown itself to be one of the most exportable of their major institutions. Parliamentary government may prove a fragile flower; ties of commerce, culture and sentiment, may weaken. But the anchor of English Common Law holds fast, and its underlying appeal may be a simple one. "We all inherit," said an English judge, "the same sense that individual personality is the unique intrinsic value we know upon this earth."

And now plunge down, across the volcanoes of Indonesia, into the great seas of the Southern Hemisphere, towards the Antipodes. And on the way, consider the spreading about the world of the British themselves. In the century from 1815 to 1914, in the greatest outpouring in their history, some 20 million people emigrated from the British Isles, mainly to the United States and Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Some called this process "shovelling out the paupers"; since its high points often coincided with the impact of disasters – bad harvests, business slumps, the Highland clearances, the Irish famines.

Emigration was also a response to the more steady phenomenon of population growth. People massed in the overcrowded, unhealthy new urban centres of the Industrial Revolution, many of them displaced agricultural labourers, looked to the open spaces across the seas for an escape from squalor and poverty and a fresh start in life. In the early days the

shipboard conditions they faced were often as appalling as those prevailing in the slave-ships. Lord Durham remarked that you could always tell an emigrant ship, even at gunshot range, by her terrible smell.

Dumped with some 700 convicts on a remote Australian beach in a welter of discomfort and danger, a lady was soon noting in her diary: "We do not see Mr. Dawes frequently. He is so much engaged with the stars." And less than 50 years later another new arrival in the same country marvelled at the achievement of his compatriots. "Here am I, partaking of an excellent repast served in a way which would be creditable in London or Paris. What wonderful civilizing tendencies the Anglo-Saxon race seems to have! How does it come to pass? It is that every Englishman is brought up to read, learn and digest the word of God. This prevents vacillation of character, gives him an object in life, a tenacious perseverance."

The divine ally of the British adapted His miracles to the needs and natures of His chosen pioneers. Samuel Goldswain, son of the Buckinghamshire soil, lost and famished in the South African wilderness, sought the Almighty's aid. "As soon as I had nelt down I saw sum thing wite in sum grass. I puled it out and to my astunishment wen I onfoulded a sheet of fulcap paper I found a round cut off of a sixpenny wite lofe of bread spread with very nice freash Butter and then a slice of salted tung and an other round of bread. Glorey be to his holey name."

And if the Lord pushed sandwiches under British noses in the nick of time, he also fortified British purposes in due season. "I commenced plowing," Samuel continues, "but I had not gon more than two furrowers before my plow braek all into peaces and what to do I did not know. At last I deturmined to make a new one: I did so and it ancerd quit well."

New climates and new forces worked on the generations of British emigrants – on country bumpkins and slum-dwellers seeking a better lot, on younger sons of the gentry with no inheritance of land and no expectations, on black sheep "packed off to the colonies," on men adventurous or on the run – to create a new variety of *Homo Britannicus*. This new man, British in origin, but changed by fortune, environment, and the pressures of the country of his choice, has no recognized generic name. He might, perhaps, be called "Commonwealth Man," except that he is not one but many.

New Zealanders differ from Australians, Australians from Canadians. Certain characteristics, nevertheless, tend to mark them all. They are frequently better developed physically than their forebears, and also less reserved, less class-conscious, and harder-working. There can be tensions, though, in their relations with their British cousins. They sometimes mistrust the Britishers' sophistication, watchful for the nuances of slight, and they may defend themselves by implying how much better things are done where they come from. But in the subtle, sweet-and-sour mystique of British Commonwealth contact, the divergence is not simply between home stock and offspring. In the Antipodes today are two neighbouring offspring-nations which are remarkably different from each other.

On the gentle slopes that fringe New Zealand's majestic Alpine core lives a people so well ordered and responsible as to approach the ideal of the "reasonable man" beloved of English law. The roots of this temperament are essentially British. And New Zealand retains a special place in British hearts. The All-Black Rugby side are received at Twickenham and Murrayfield with more affection than any other touring side. Perhaps that is because New Zealand, as far away from her origins as the surface of the earth allows, is in many respects a replica of Britain. Policemen wear helmets. A stream of men clocking in at an Auckland factory could be mistaken for their counterparts in Birmingham. At country shows velvet-capped girls and bowler-hatted judges faithfully mirror Pony Club rallies in the English shires.

In the 1840s, Edward Gibbon Wakefield and his colleagues – colonial reformers who wished to relieve British poverty and over-population by schemes of "systematic colonization" – sought to establish in New Zealand a community, based on British *mores*, but more encouraging to enterprise and merit. Despite set-backs and dissensions they succeeded in making the "island of the Long White Cloud" a place

where men but talk of gold and sheep
And think of sheep and gold.

Cheese and butter, lamb and apples made lasting links with Britain; close studies of her tastes and habits become of vital day-to-day concern. And the market ties of farming were reinforced by those of growing industry: shoe polish in tins bearing the kiwi, New Zealand's national bird, have long figured on British shopping lists. Evangelical, as well as market forces, moulded the character of New Zealand. Missionary societies, active throughout the Pacific, strove to protect the native Maori civilization against the capitalist intruder, and, indeed, attempted to prevent the colonization of New Zealand at all.

That they were unable to do; but it may be that the clash and compromise of these two forces – commercial enterprise and Christian ethics – have much to do with the modern New Zealander's approach to life. "The fact is," wrote the novelist, Samuel Butler, a successful New Zealand sheep-farmer as a young man, "that people here are busy making money. Yet it may be questioned whether the intellect is not as well schooled here as at home.

"There is much nonsense in the old country from which people here are free. There is little conventionalism, little formality, much liberality of sentiment, and a healthy sensible tone." While carefully maintaining her ties with Britain, New Zealand has managed to slough off the vestiges of feudalism in the British way of life. She was one of the earliest nations to embrace the concept of the welfare state. Here native-white relations eventually became the envy of less successfully integrated plural societies.

Her citizens sometimes complain of the provincialism born of isolation; and it is true that many of her best men – Ernest Rutherford, the physicist, was but one example – tend to gravitate to Britain. But in many fields of public policy – such as the provision of comprehensive secondary education of high quality and the redistribution of the national wealth – she is ahead of her prototype and is already what many people in Britain would like their own country to become.

BOWLED OVER

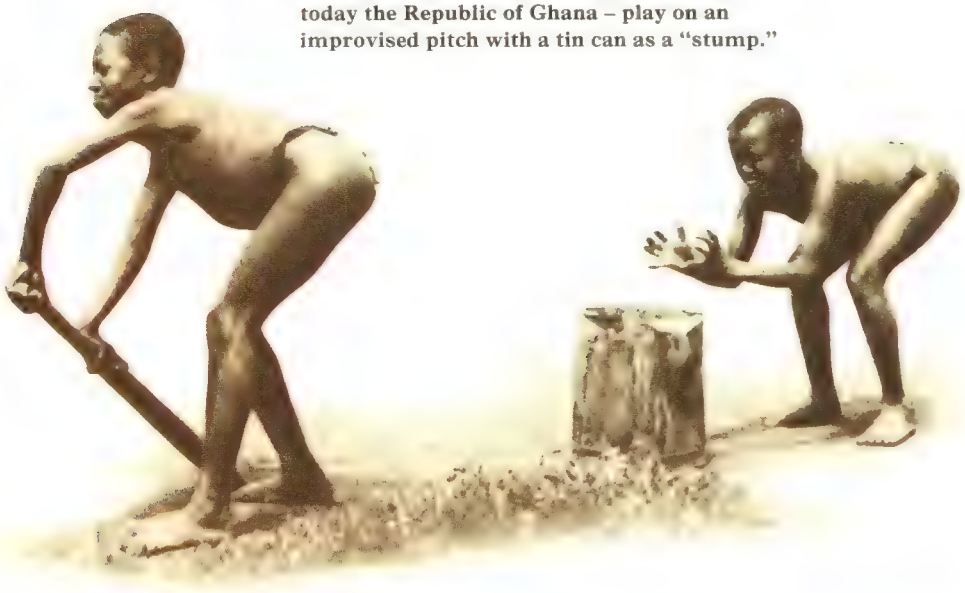
Cricket has been exported from the British Isles ever since the 17th Century, when settlers introduced it into the American colonies. British merchants set up stumps in Aleppo as early as 1676, but the game spread to non-British peoples only in the 19th Century, when Indians, Aboriginals and Africans took to it with a facility that quickly rivalled that of their teachers.

This young batsman is typical of the able and enthusiastic cricketers who flourish among Australia's Aboriginal inhabitants.

Aboriginal cricketers, the first Australian team to visit England, pose with boomerangs and spears as well as bats and wickets. Their European manager, Charles Lawrence, is at the top.

The Great Imperial Game

Young West Africans on the Gold Coast – today the Republic of Ghana – play on an improvised pitch with a tin can as a "stump."



Cricket has always been an important tie with home for expatriate Britons. No climate was too harsh and no crisis too great to keep them from what the Victorians regarded as "this manly and athletic game." It was being played in South Africa by the newly-arrived British at the end of the 18th Century and in Sydney in 1803, within a few years of the first British colonial settlement in New South Wales.

Though intended as an "English" game for the amusement of lonely Englishmen, the locals soon picked it up and to colonial natives, from the South Pacific to the Caribbean, from the Far East to Africa, cricket rapidly became a proud and visible sign of their association with the Empire.

As the British penetrated further into Australia and Africa, so, too, did cricketing fever, and dedicated and skilful native teams soon emerged. The first native team to make an impact in England were Australian Aboriginals (opposite), who undertook a successful tour of the mother-country in 1868, ten years before their white compatriots did so.

Equipped with bats, pads and caps, these otherwise naked African youngsters rival the would-be professionalism of English prep-schoolboys.

The Seasons of the Raj

In few parts of the world has British influence been so all-pervasive as in India. And the sporting Englishman left his mark on the sub-continent as firmly as did any architect, military leader or government administrator. Sailors from the East India Company introduced cricket to the Gulf of Cambay, on the west coast, in 1721. A cricket club was formed in Calcutta in 1792, and by the time Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India in 1877, Indians of all religious persuasions had become addicted to the pursuit of cricket.

Its spread had accelerated after 1841, when Lord Hill, Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, made it mandatory for every barracks in the United Kingdom to have a cricket pitch. From then on, troops, wherever they were posted – and postings to India were particularly heavy – spread the good word of the willow and the stump as zealously as missionaries had earlier spread the Gospel message to the unenlightened.

Before the century ended, India had produced her most famous international cricketer, K.S. Ranjitsinjhi, later the Maharajah of Newanagar. Known on the pitch as Ranji, he was the first Indian to become a Cambridge cricket blue and the first batsman anywhere to beat the record total of 2,739 runs for a single season set up by the legendary W.G. Grace. Ranji scored 2,780 in 1896. So entrenched is cricket in India today that her factories now manufacture gloves, bats and balls for export to England and the Commonwealth.

British soldiers lay on "A little game of Cricket at Lucknow" in this *Punch* sketch of 1903.

Calcutta cricketers meet a visiting team from the 68th Light Infantry in 1861. The Calcutta ground is reputedly the oldest outside Britain.

Indian cricketers, their names and positions identified in Urdu script, take on a completely Oriental air in this drawing of a Punjab team.

II. The Birth of Commonwealth Man

The visiting All Blacks Rugby team from New Zealand take on Leicester in September, 1905. A crowd of 13,000 watched the visitors win, 28–0.

It is hard to believe that Australia's people, only 1,500 miles away across the Tasman Sea, stem from the same British stock as the New Zealanders. In Australia, the early British settler – sheep-squatting, farming, gold-digging – pitted himself against a huge and hostile continent, most of which was proof against his advance. Even now, nearly two centuries later, only its outer seaboard rim has been fully subdued: the great, red, desiccated interior still awaits the quickening touch of technologies unborn or in their infancy.

In an environment so formidable, extremes of success and failure were always on the cards. The pioneer could win a dazzling fortune or he could become the victim of utter ruin. In any event, he had to fend for himself; and, in emergency, for his companion as well. His descendant of today is, perhaps, not noted for the quiet, collaborative outlook of his New Zealand neighbour. He tends to be more combative and competitive. An English businessman visiting Australia for the first time exclaimed in bewilderment: "Whatever you try to do here, a million hands reach for your throat."

The Australian reaches also for the moon. He takes a chance, gives it a go, preferably on a scale commensurate with his surroundings: the Sydney opera-house, with its tremendous ultra-modern shell-backed roofs, is probably the biggest act of faith or folly in the Southern Hemisphere. Australia has more of the "frontier spirit" than New Zealand: it is doubtful if any other country would have welcomed the Pope, as Australia did, on a racecourse.

The Australian's ties with Britain are everywhere evident. The billy-can, slung from the stockman's saddle, is the outback version of the English teapot. He is a confirmed, not to say renowned, beer-drinker; and he downs his light, potent, bitingly cold draughts – nectar after a day's work in semi-tropical heat – in an establishment called a pub.

Many of his older buildings are decorated with "lace" – the delicate, filigreed, wrought-ironwork, reminder of a gracious Georgian London, brought out as ballast in returning wool ships. In Newcastle, New South Wales, as in Newcastle upon Tyne, when a Test Match is in progress, assessment of the latest score is as essential a prelude to business as coffee in the Arab world; and the roar that greets a century abolishes 13,000 miles of water.

The laconic independence of the Australian is proverbial. He profoundly suspects imposed authority. A cop is a cop is a cop, and a Sydney saying has it that "everything in Australia strikes except matches." If British seems best he buys it; but he shrewdly shops around. Sheep and cattle stations reflect his traditional respect for British stock-breeding; but Charolais and Brahmin herds are gaining ground. Triumphs, Jaguars,

The South African Springboks score a conversion during their match with Midland Counties at Leicester in 1906. The South Africans won, 29–0.

Minis abound on his roads; but so do Volkswagens, Chryslers, Toyotas and his own Holdens.

And independence has led to orginality: the Australian arts – especially painting, music, ballet – have struck out into new and virile themes of sun and space, owing little to European influence. Collectively, he is among Britain's firmest friends; but he demands that each Briton prove himself on his merits, not on his genealogy. "Bloody Pom" (said to derive from the initials P.O.H.M., "Prisoner of his Majesty," stencilled on the early convicts' backs) which can be a term of pitying endearment or of vicious abuse.

In colonial times the Australian was known for his prickly defensiveness. But a yardstick of his modern self-confidence is the pleasure he now takes in laughing at himself. One expression of this amiable trait is the cult of "Strine," – "Australian" language. Dr. Affabeck Lauder, originator of that esoteric tongue, might regard an exercise along the following lines as suitable for a beginner:

Trenslite inner Inglish (Translate into English):

1. Yurra nong sheila, buttcher bute inyerhwy.
2. Thairtbex fuller crud – kensensetch. Tortabey cline dup.
3. Doughby grady. Youvad nuf.
4. Ess eezowta jile – godjobza bairn-dryroider.
5. Things crook nInglen?

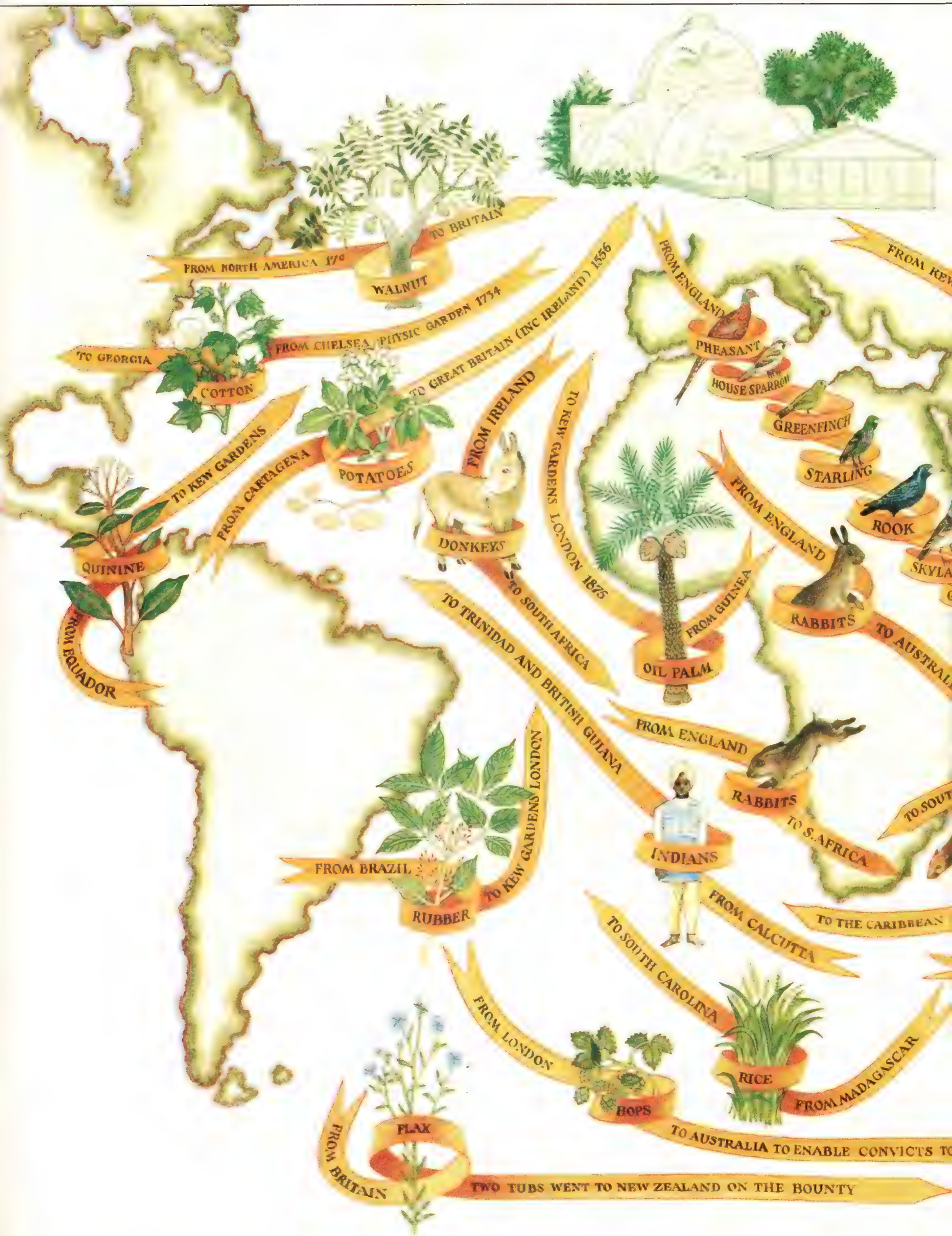
The translation is:

1. You're a no-good girl, but you're attractive in your way.
2. The outback's full of junk – cans and such. It ought to be cleaned up.
3. Don't be greedy. You've had enough.
4. Yes he's out of gaol – got a job as a boundary-rider.
5. Things bad in England?

If Australia changed the British, the converse is also true. Travel in the train known as "The Ghan" the thousand miles from the south coast, across some of the most barren deserts in the world, to Alice Springs at the continent's heart. With luck you may catch a passing glimpse of a herd of wild camels, plodding through the scrub and gravel at the horizon's edge. Their ancestors were brought from India to serve as transport in these wastes.

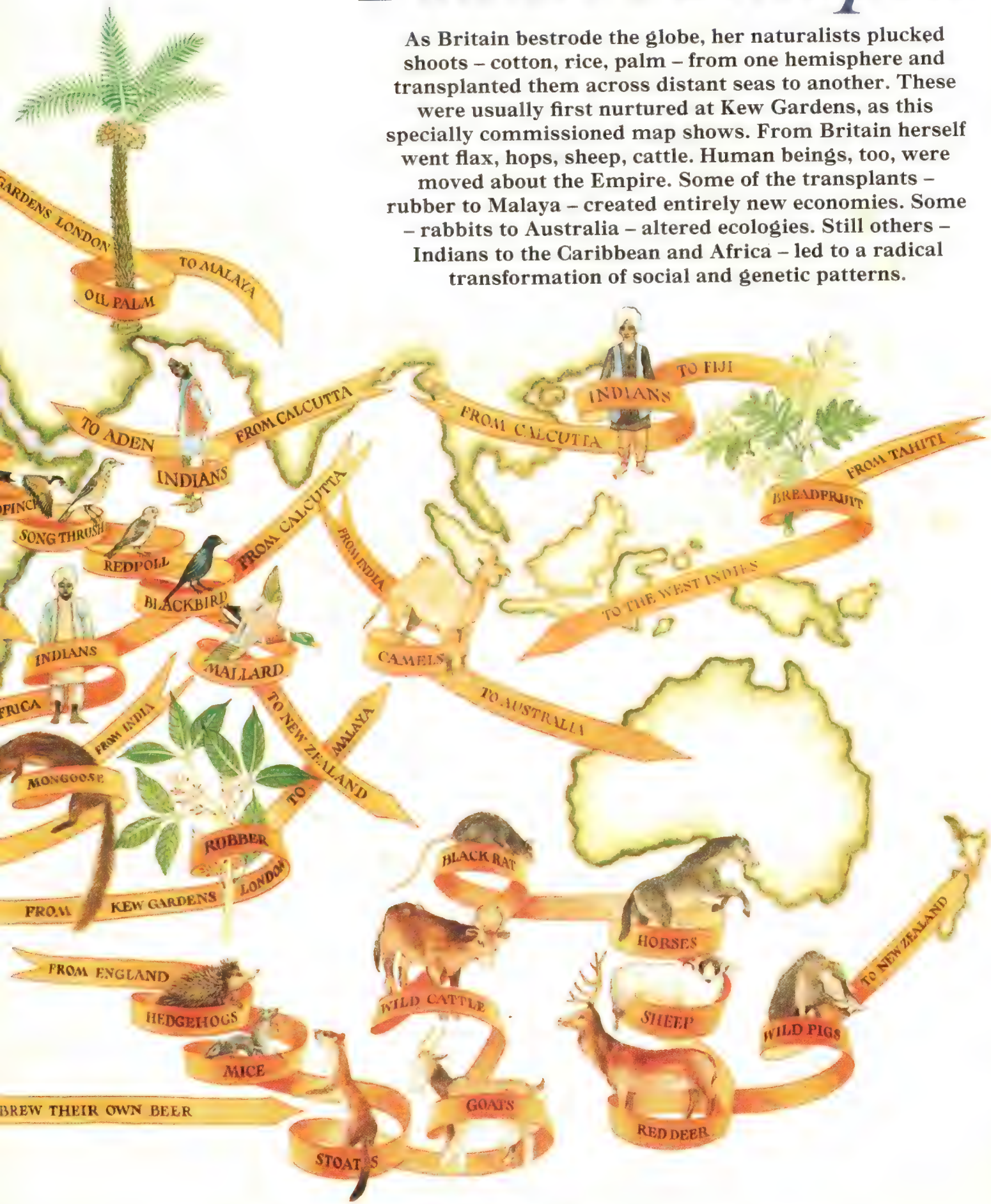
Australia exemplifies the perseverance that the British applied to transplanting animals and crops about their Empire and the scale on which they did it. To the vast continent inhabited by marsupial species they imported the entire range of Australia's present domestic livestock: sheep, cattle, pigs, horses, dogs and cats. And, by some lack of foresight, rabbits.

From Australia went droves of "Walers," the weight-carrying stock-horses that became the favourite mounts of the Indian Army. And as they shunted sugar, tea, tobacco, potatoes, bread-fruit,


FROM NORTH AMERICA 17c
TO BRITAIN
WALNUT
TO GEORGIA
FROM CHELSEA PHYSIC GARDEN 1754
COTTON
TO GREAT BRITAIN (INC IRELAND) 1556
POTATOES
FROM CARTAGENA
TO KEW GARDENS
QUININE
FROM EQUADOR
FROM IRELAND
DONKEYS
TO SOUTH AFRICA
TO KEW GARDENS LONDON 1875
OIL PALM
FROM GUINEA
TO TRINIDAD AND BRITISH GUIANA
FROM BRAZIL
TO KEW GARDENS LONDON
RUBBER
FROM ENGLAND
PHEASANT
HOUSE SPARROW
GREENFINCH
STARLING
ROOK
FROM ENGLAND
RABBITS
TO AUSTRAL
FROM ENGLAND
RABBITS
TO S.AFRICA
TO SOUT
INDIANS
FROM CALCUTTA
TO THE CARIBBEAN
TO SOUTH CAROLINA
FROM LONDON
HOPS
RICE
FROM MADAGASCAR
FLAX
FROM BRITAIN
TO AUSTRALIA TO ENABLE CONVICTS TO
TWO TUBS WENT TO NEW ZEALAND ON THE BOUNTY

Nature Reshaped

As Britain bestrode the globe, her naturalists plucked shoots – cotton, rice, palm – from one hemisphere and transplanted them across distant seas to another. These were usually first nurtured at Kew Gardens, as this specially commissioned map shows. From Britain herself went flax, hops, sheep, cattle. Human beings, too, were moved about the Empire. Some of the transplants – rubber to Malaya – created entirely new economies. Some – rabbits to Australia – altered ecologies. Still others – Indians to the Caribbean and Africa – led to a radical transformation of social and genetic patterns.



rubber, to and fro across the globe, so the British, in the belief that its gum, like alcohol, was effective against malaria, took the eucalyptus tree to India and set it in arching avenues along their trunk roads, in shimmering stands around their compounds and cantonments. At the same time, in Australia, they sowed English grass, vegetables and cereals, and planted the weeping willow cuttings which, tradition holds, came from Napoleon's tomb on St. Helena.

From Australia, wing your way across the Indian Ocean and the great arc of the Bay of Bengal, to the subcontinent that stretches from the curtain of the Himalayas to the surf of the Malabar Coast. Here the British viceroys governed an empire within an Empire, larger in itself than all the territories ruled by ancient Rome. Their executive instrument was the Indian Civil Service, the hand-picked élite of a few hundred men whom Gandhi called "the most powerful secret corporation ever known," and Curzon dubbed "a mighty and meticulous machine for doing nothing."

Their memorial stands intact in the enormous terracotta complex of Sir Edwin Lutyens's New Delhi – combining, in its stretching vistas and austere façades, echoes of both Washington and Whitehall. Nearby, on Independence Day in 1947, the standard of the Indian Republic was raised on the walls of the Red Fort; and while Churchill spoke in Westminster of the great ship sinking in the calm sea, the little flag, watched by white-clad multitudes, climbed from the frowning Mughul bastions to signal the end of an era.

India had always fascinated the British with a magic at once magnetic and repellent. In the opening decades of their presence there, the British plundered India with cheerful zest, while at the same time assuming an attitude of almost friendly intimacy with the natives. The blood bath of the Mutiny in 1857 dispelled that mood of easy assurance and replaced it with one of apprehension and anxiety. It bred the aloof, distant manners of the British that so shocked sensitive men like E.M. Forster.

But, though the Mutiny changed British attitudes towards Indians, its suppression confirmed in British minds the rights and duties of sovereignty. Thereafter, what the British did in India was done with posterity in view; what they built was built to last. Now, a generation after their departure, it is hard to move far without encountering the aura of permanence they left.

In India, imperial architecture reached its zenith. Hill stations, with their cosy jumble of church towers, red-brick lodgings, fretwork balconies; barrack squares, their windows shaded from the sun by heavy fibre matting; English suburban villas – "Acacia Nook," "Windermere," "Rest Haven" – in their tropical guise of bungalows with broad verandas and rows of potted plants; graceful pavilions, slender-pillared bandstands, ornamented clock-towers; examples of them everywhere abound, though time has given them new uses and fresh tenants.

Still the heart of Bombay is dominated by the domes and pinnacles of gargantuan public buildings, their scale seldom exceeded even in London, their styles ranging from Gothic to classical Italian: secretariat and library, law courts and post office, a herd of elephants frozen in brick and metal. The crowning colossus is the Victoria Railway Terminus, its approaches ornamented with fountains and statues, its ponderous masses towered, columned, rose-windowed.

Indians today tend to smile when complimented on their efficient railway system; for in imperial times its British originators never tired of singing its praises. And in their former steam-hauled glory, the Indian railways were indeed a wonder. Uniforms were spick and span, locomotives gleamed, training-schools and sports grounds were the equal of anything at Crewe or Swindon.

Station-masters, drivers, guards, even platelayers, were mostly British; and the railways were but one part of the economic infrastructure that the British laid from end to end of the subcontinent: roads, dams, telecommunications, power. Insufficient, possibly; built for alien purposes, often: but these foundations, since extended, deepened, multiplied, have done much to equip the modern Indian economy for industrial growth.

The British upper crust enjoyed a life of leisure, cushioned by the household retinue of bearers, *syces* (grooms), *ayahs* (nursemaids), *malis* (gardeners), *dhobis* (washermen). For anyone of consequence, membership of a club was almost mandatory. Wherever the British went, clubs were formed.

In the smaller towns they might be merely unpretentious bolt-holes, refuges from the chatter of the *memsahibs*. But in the bigger centres they were stately palaces of marble, leather-appointed, filled with the murmur of small talk, the sudden rasp of snores, the rustle of *The Times of India*, the soft pad of salver-laden servants swathed in brilliant sashes.

Lists of candidates were closely scrutinized; in the more exclusive clubs no one tainted with trade could hope to escape the blackball. The number of merchants who discovered links with a profession was surprising; so was that of planters who found that they were also agricultural scientists. In the Bombay Gymkhana hung a famous placard: "Dogs and Women Not Admitted."

Indians, it went without saying, were even less acceptable. Many of these clubs flourish still. But now the British often enter as guests of Indian members; and the talk is less likely to be of port and polo than of refineries and steel-making.

In 1835, Thomas Babington Macaulay, then a member of the Supreme Council under the East India Company, wrote his famous minute urging the teaching "of English literature and science through the medium of the English language." The aim was less philanthropic than political. It was "to form a class of interpreters between us and the natives we govern," to create, in effect, a body of Indian propagandists who would help to strengthen the British Raj.

Macaulay was not proposing education for the masses, and long after Victoria became Empress of India in 1877, only one in a hundred of her Indian subjects attended any kind of school. Yet Macaulay might have been astonished at the results of what he set in motion, at how widespread the use of English in India became.

Recently, an English tourist found himself in Travancore, in the far south. The road which he was travelling led through fields of an unfamiliar crop, and he was interested to know what it was. The landscape was empty save for a dark figure clad only in a loin-cloth and a puggaree; and with him, clearly, no fruitful contact

CHAPTER 6

ORIGINAL BAD

40. God he been make Adam and Eva good and holy ?

Yes, God he been make Adam and Eva good and holy. Them been get glad, them no been get trouble.

41. Adam and Eva them been stop good all time ?

No, Adam and Eva them no been stop good all time, them been broke some law, whe God he been put for them.

42. How Adam and Eva them been broke God he law ?

Adam and Eva them been broke God he law, how them been chop for the stick whe God he been talk say, make them no chop.

43. Who he been push Adam and Eva for spoil God he law ?

Satan he been hide heself for inside some snake, and so he been push Adam and Eva for chop the law-stick.

44. How God he been punish Adam and Eva?

God he been move Adam and Eva from Eden Garden. He been talk for them say : "You no go come back for Eden, you go work, you go get chop forseka water for your face, after you go die."

45. How we de call this bad for Adam and Eva ?

We de call this bad for Adam and Eva say, the Original Bad, i mean say: the first bad.

46. Who's kind thing Adam and Eva them been loss forseka this bad ?

Forseka this bad Adam and Eva them been loss Gratia for God, them been loss the power for go for heaven and them been loss plenty more fine dash whe God he been give for them.

47. Adam and Eva them been loss this dash only for themself or for other people also ?

Adam and Eva them been loss this dash for all man. Any man whe them de born he get Original Bad for he soul, whe i lock the road for heaven, and he get for look trouble soté he go die.

48. Some person he lif whe no been get Original Bad ?

Holy Maria he one only, he no been get Original Bad. Forseka this we de call he say: Immaculate Conception.

49. God he been lef man for die with he bad ?

No, God he no been lef man for die with he bad. God he been send we a Helper, for move Original Bad and all other bad for we soul.

The Nigerian Pidgin (a Chinese corruption of "business") in this catechism was one of several Pidgin dialects used in converse with natives.

was possible. The visitor was turning away when the figure spoke. "Good day," came an accent almost indistinguishable from that of a B.B.C. announcer. "Can I help you?" Taken aback, the tourist put his question. "That's tapioca," his informant replied. An attempt to suppress an English shudder evoked a quick smile. "I've heard that in Britain children are forced to eat puddings made of it."

Conversely, the British in India spoke a language that can still be heard. It was a patois of words drawn from native tongues, and from those of previous conquerors or settlers – Arab, Mongol, Portuguese, French, Chinese. It was called "Hobson-Jobson" – which meant, in Army slang, a confused uproar, and was said to be a corruption of the cry "Ya, Hassan! Ya, Hussein!" wailed by mourning Muslims during the Moharram procession.

"The bukshee is an awful bahadur, but he keeps a first-rate bobachee," a subaltern of Skinner's Horse might whisper in the mess, referring to the excellence of the cook in the service of a pompous ass of a paymaster. When he woke you in the morning, your bearer brought your *chota-hazri* (little breakfast). At midday, if you had no time for *tiffin* (lunch) you might have a bowl of *mish-mash* (rice soup) at your desk, mopping your brow with your *roomaul* (handkerchief).

And, out for an airing, your wife's *jomponnies* (chair-bearers) might come upon the *pug* (track) of a tiger. *Buggy, cheroot, coolie, curry, kedgeree, loot, mulligatawny, paddy, pukka, veranda,* all passed into English via Hobson-Jobson. So did the phrase, "I don't give a damn," from the copper coin of little value called a *dam*. "It was," observed a disapproving commentator, "the Duke of Wellington who invented this oath, so disproportionate to the greatness of its author."

The collision of British and Indian cultures produced some bizarre effects, such as the introduction into India of the public notice, a form of official communication for which the British bureaucracy has always had a weakness. Trudging, a century ago, along the corridors of Indian hotels, guests were frequently reminded that "Gentlemen do not strike the Servants." More recently, strollers in a municipal park in Kashmir have come upon a notice which, in its combination of the didactic and the vague, seems to summarize both the Western and Eastern approaches to authority. It says, so those who claim to have studied it affirm, "Do not Urinate near this Notice."

Disraeli said of the British Empire that it represented "the union of those two qualities for which a Roman emperor was deified: *Imperium et Libertas*." India, in her British days, saw much of the former quality. Yet modern, independent India is among the most liberal of countries, open-minded and experimental. Beset with grievous problems of poverty, corruption and over-population, she seldom seeks to conceal them; she equally seldom complains of their existence.

Frank and objective in her assault on them, she acts as something of a beacon to those people, in the advanced as well as the emergent world, concerned with the establishment of new social priorities. If, down the years, she reached beyond the "imperium," and drew from the British a measure of their "libertas" to add to her own spirit, it surely stands to the credit of both nations.

Beneath the westering sun a long, low-lying line rises from the Arabian Sea,

passing into infinity to north and south. It is the eastern seaboard of Africa – where Britain's withdrawal has created a tragic human problem. Just as the ideas of scientists and settlers suggested the transference of animals and plants across the Empire, so the demands of economic development called for the redistribution of labour among Britain's possessions – sometimes on a considerable scale.

In the 19th Century these secondary cross-migrations within the overseas Empire were stimulated partly by the abolition of slavery under the British flag, partly by shortages of local manpower for major construction projects, partly by the disinclination of workers, white and coloured, to face unfamiliar conditions or unpleasant climates, and partly by the simple hope of getting labour cheap.

Chinese coolies, for example, became a common sight on the sugar plantations of Queensland, and Lascar stokers often worked in British vessels on the Eastern run. Nor were these movements confined to subject peoples: the British Isles contributed their quota to a nomadic imperial labour force. Navvies moved about to wherever there was a market for their muscle-power.

By far the largest source of migrant labour was India. All round the shores of the Indian Ocean and far beyond, Indians with little hope at home found a living – comfortable or the reverse – in the imperial structure. There were skilled Indian pilots on the St. Lawrence river; Indian masons, clerks, accountants, in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East; Indian labourers by the thousands in the canefields of the West Indies and the tea-gardens of Ceylon.

So great, at times, was the demand for Indian hands, and so easily was it met, that employment agents from many colonies were based in Calcutta, and the processing of applicants was government-controlled. The system was one of indenture: a man agreed to work abroad for a given period of years; then, his term completed, he could either accept a paid passage home or remain where he was as a free settler.

Officially, such arrangements might seem open and above board: but, in practice, crowds of illiterate, hungry men fell ready prey to unscrupulous recruitment. In eastern Africa, as a result, the Indian presence became to some extent synonymous with the British. To speed the building of the Uganda railway in the 1890s, Indian labourers were brought in by the shipload. Many chose to stay on afterwards, and others from the homeland joined them.

Intelligent and industrious families grew up, often better equipped than their African neighbours to prosper in the offices and banks, factories and shops of a commercially orientated society. The unfortunate result is that their abilities – and their tendency to remain apart – have come to be resented as in Uganda; and they have been rejected by politically independent African communities struggling to improve their own fortunes.

"When you have made up your mind to go to West Africa," Mary Kingsley, the trader-explorer of West Africa, said in 1893, "the best thing you can do is to get it unmade again." The thick, damp mists of the Gulf of Guinea, the lethal, little-understood diseases – especially cholera

The cloistered mood of an Oxford college pervades the University of Baroda in western India.

and yellow fever – made the west coast the white man's grave. "No philanthropist," a magistrate wrote from Gambia, "comes here for purposes of disinterested teaching, no professional man settles to practice, no emigrant brings his wife or children."

Few Britons passed their lives here who were not essential to the maintenance of government or the conduct of trade. Medicine has changed all that, and Britain's ties with West Africa are now stronger than before and rather different from those with other ex-colonial regions. The British presence today is commercial and collaborative; there is less weight of tradition than is sometimes felt elsewhere, less consciousness of a hierarchical past.

True, on state occasions the mingling of chiefly robes with those of judges and parliamentary officials perpetuates the pageantry of Westminster. Soldiers wear the berets familiar in Aldershot, ride in army vehicles beside officers bearing the unmistakable stamp of Sandhurst. And in schools where African principals preside over teaching staffs who often reflect a cross-section of the Commonwealth – Pakistanis, New Zealanders, Indians, Canadians – there are prefects, games and prep, and the talk is of O- and A-levels and Cambridge Entrance papers.

But out in the swelter of street and bush, the flavour of Britain that you meet is husky, homely, everyday. On market days women unload lorries painted with arresting texts: "Jesus Saves," "Death where is thy Sting?" – reminders of missionary effort. Through the chaffer and guffaws of bargaining you weave your way to stalls where the staples of the British kitchen shelf proliferate: Red Label tea, butter-puff biscuits, sauces by appointment to Her Majesty; and among the rolls of gorgeous cottons, African-designed and Manchester-made, you find swim-suits from Marks and Spencer.

At tin-roofed counters, in plastic-seated cafés loud with swing, there is instant coffee, fish and chips, bangers and mash. And driving home you may pass a a roadside hoarding, startling in its evocation of British advertising style: *Mrs. Okezie's Circumcision – For Meticulous and Unrisky Circumcision of All Male Babies. A Trial Will Convince You.*

Our journey into the setting sun of Empire is nearly done. Atlantic rollers give way to Channel chop, to chalk cliffs and grey skies, to the island landscapes where the people speak, in slow broad vowels or swift clipped idiom, the language that has been the cement of nations all along our route. It is the language fused from ancient European tongues and brought into cohesive usage more than a thousand years ago by an Anglo-Saxon king, Alfred the Great, as the only vernacular acceptable to the mosaic of men, indigenous and invading, who formed the ancestors of the British people.

In recent decades, governments of former British colonies, seeking to cut clear of the past, have made attempts to discourage the use of English within their borders. Most of them have been quietly shelved; for the advantages of a *lingua franca* widespread enough to provide an international medium, poetic enough to crystallize the reaches of the human spirit, sufficiently precise to convey the concepts of scientific thought, have proved overwhelming. Perhaps the "English-speaking world" will be Britain's most enduring monument to the era of her universal presence.

If that presence changed the world, so was Britain changed by the Empire. Long after the Union Jack has been lowered in the last colony, the face of Britain will surely, as now, reflect the centuries when she presided over the greatest extent of the earth's surface to be controlled from a single point since the Mongol empire of Genghis Khan.

Across the green of hill and dale stand palaces and country houses – the Royal Pavilion at Brighton, Sezincote in the Cotswolds – echoing in their styles travel and trade and rule in Orient and Occident; gardens like Wisley and Hidcote, where rare plants from the Himalayas and the Rockies have been lovingly reared. And beneath the haze of industrial towns new citizens from Asia, Africa and the West Indies mingle with the descendants of Celts and Saxons, Danes and Normans – suggesting in the imperial aftermath an acceptance of reality and responsibility seldom evident at the Empire's height.

London still evokes the impact of the Empire on the city that was its heart: the streets where Gurkhas, Bengal Lancers and the Anzacs have marched; the Guildhall's statue of William Pitt the Elder with its forthright inscription, "He made commerce to flourish by war"; the magnificent India Office Library, probably the greatest collection of works on one country ever assembled in the capital of another; the chambers of the Privy Council, where the Judicial Committee sat as the supreme dispenser of the Empire's justice; Kew Gardens, hub of its botanical management, with its continuing links to universities and research stations around the globe; the Imperial College of Science and Technology, founded to spread the fruits of British discovery through the colonies; and the Royal Albert Hall, where a generation that never saw the Empire in its hope and glory still roars out Elgar's majestic paean of loyalty.

Soldiers, seamen, explorers, merchants, missionaries, governors, viceroys: the great names of Empire have gone, along with the many more unknown and humble men from every part of Britain who executed their orders from the Arctic Circle to the Antipodes. By their efforts, they left a world permanently altered; partly by their material works, but partly also by the imprint of themselves. And the persistence into our time of that second, intangible legacy seems to suggest that they inspired towards themselves a love-hate attitude of a kind not seen in history since the decline of Rome.

The hatred inspired by conquerors and rulers is easy to understand; and the British could be overbearing, contemptuous, acquisitive, violent, smug and short-sighted. But they were teachers and guardians as well; and with all their faults they were often generous, heroic, efficient, passionate, scholarly and sensitive.

Their contradictions can be seen, in retrospect, as sorting themselves into a balance: a balance perhaps tilting in their favour. They had experience, expertise, energy, certainty: qualities of immense importance in the age of their ascendancy. And even now, amid the perplexities of changing values and the humiliations of dwindled power, they have not yet forgotten Burke's prophetic admonition: "As long as you have the wisdom to keep this country as the sanctuary of liberty, wherever men worship freedom they will turn their faces towards you"

ECHOES OF EMPIRE

Wherever Britain chose to impose her dominion, British attitudes and modes of behaviour still persist. Punjabi troops (below), beating the retreat in New Delhi to celebrate India's annual Republic Day, wear turbans of their own heritage, but the rest of their dress is strictly British. The stately setting for their ceremony is designed by the English architect, Sir Edwin Lutyens. Elsewhere in former and remaining British territories, social events, fashions, institutions, courts of law and State occasions continue to echo the call of the imperial past.

The British Bequest

"We send a boy out here and a boy there," wrote G.W. Steevens, star reporter of the aggressively imperialist *Daily Mail*, in 1897, "and the boy takes hold of the savages of the part he comes to, and teaches them to march and shoot as he tells them, to obey him and believe him and die for him and the Queen."

In the 20th Century, Britain began to pursue a more enlightened policy towards her colonial subjects, anxious to win their respect for the principles of British parliamentary democracy rather than their blind obedience to imperial masters. As nation after nation prepared to haul down the Union Jack, Britain spent more money to buttress their fledgling independence than ever she had before.

Many of the new parliamentary democracies were quick to reject the Westminster model of government, but in most of them, ceremonial, judicial and social conventions introduced under the British have prevailed beyond British rule.

A traditionally clad member of Kenya's Limuru Hunt gives some encouragement to the hounds.

The Kenya parliament's sergeant-at-arms carries a gold-and-ivory mace decorated with carved elephants. The traditional black garb of the British parliament's sergeant-at-arms was rejected by the Kenyans as being too drab.

Kilted Nigerian soldiers usher in their country's independence on November 1, 1960, with the skirl of bagpipes and rolling of drums.

In Ghana's Court of Appeals, as in courts throughout the Commonwealth, the judges' wigs and robes derive from those in England. The 19th-Century American writer, Ralph Waldo Emerson, once noted that "the English sway of their colonies has no roots of kindness in it . . . they are more just than kind."

GOBIND
STORE
36

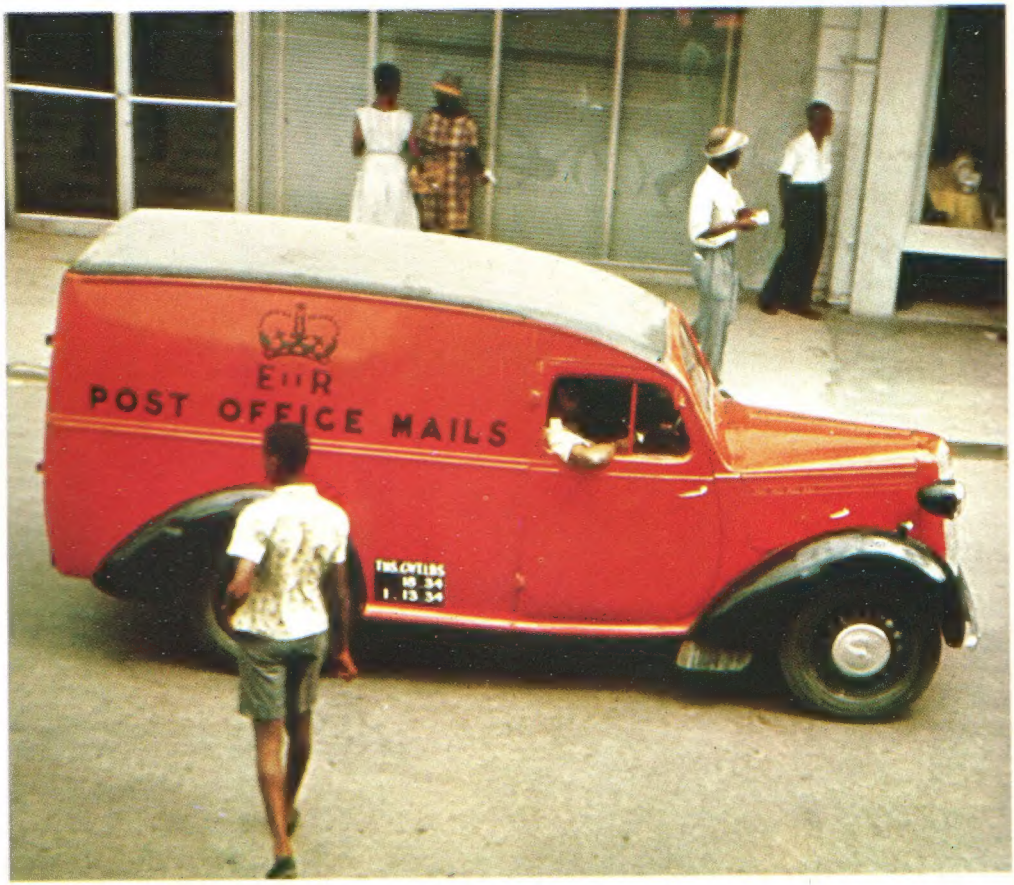
The Royal Mail van in this Bridgetown street looks as though it could have driven straight from England. It even has right-hand drive, standard throughout the British Caribbean.

Loyal "Little England"

Britain laid claim to Barbados, her first Caribbean possession, in 1605. And no flag but the Union Jack ever flew over this sugar-rich island until 1966, when the gold-and-ultramarine banner of a newly-independent Barbados was raised. The long and uninterrupted British tenure has left the island so completely Anglicized that it is often referred to simply as "Little England."

Her people – mostly the descendants of slaves – have always felt themselves an integral part of the British community and have clung fiercely to their loyalty, even in the face of criticism from more turbulent neighbours anxious to demonstrate their independence.

Barbadians had a Trafalgar Square and a Nelson's Column in their capital, Bridgetown, long before London built its own memorials to the hero of the Royal Navy. The islanders were also deeply involved – physically and emotionally – in the travails of the Second World War. When British fortunes were at their lowest, they cabled the government in London a rousing message: "Carry on Britain. Barbados is behind you!"



Only the tropical sunshine and the salty tang of the trade winds differentiates the Barbadian village of Horse Hill from any village in Essex or Berkshire.

Barbadian schoolgirls (left), dressed like their English counterparts in gymslips and gleaming white socks, gaze longingly at the fashions displayed in a Bridgetown store.

The coronation of King Tungi and Queen Mata'Aho of Tonga in 1967 took place in surroundings reminiscent of Westminster Abbey. King Tungi, like his late mother, Queen Salote, rules the Friendly Islands with friendliness towards Britain.

5th Battalion, 60th Regiment, 1812

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